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RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 2160  
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SUBJECT: RWANDA -- MONTHLY POLITICAL ROUNDUP

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[1](#)B. KIGALI 78  
[1](#)C. 08 KIGALI 872

Classified By: CDA Casper for reasons 1.4 (b) (d)

[1](#)1. (U) In this edition:

- Minister of Education Sacked
- Ombudsman Report on Corruption Raises Hackles in Justice Sector
- New Political Parties -- One Nearing Registration?
- Nkunda Tries A Letter Writing Campaign

Hard-Charging Minister Falls Hard on Corruption Charges

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[1](#)2. (C) On July 21, Rwandan national radio and television announced that President Kagame had fired Minister of State for Education Theoneste Mutsindashyaka. The announcement gave no reasons for the dismissal. Local press organs repeated long-running rumors of the Minister's involvement in various corruption scandals linked to his previous tenure as Governor of the Eastern Province. As noted reftel A, Prosecutor General Martin Ngoga has pursued Mutsindashyaka for some time on corruption charges stemming from construction projects in the Eastern Province. Ngoga told us two weeks ago that he had recommended to President Kagame that Mutsindashyaka be relieved of his duties and subsequently prosecuted.

[1](#)3. (C) Comment. As Minister of State for Education, and in his earlier positions as Governor of the Eastern Province and Mayor of Kigali, Mutsindashyaka built a reputation as a hard-charging and sometime belligerent official, intolerant of those who disagreed with him. The tiny Jehovah's Witness (JW) community in Rwanda must be breathing a quiet sigh of relief, as Mutsindashyaka as Mayor of Kigali forbid them construction permits for their Kingdom Halls. As Minister of State for Education, he fired several hundred JW teachers for refusing to participate in "ngando" training for secondary school instructors, training which included paramilitary-style marching in fatigues -- which they considered to violate their pacific religious practices. End comment.

¶4. (SBU) On July 8, Ombudsman Tito Rutaremara presented his yearly report on "Injustice, Corruption and Related Offenses in Public Institutions" to Parliament. A generally mild review of the lapses and poor practices of various government offices, the report noted poor tendering procedures, faulty management of assets, the absence of internal audits, and occasional embezzlement of state funds. The report particularly criticized corrupt tendencies among four categories of local officials -- sector level "service delivery" officials, gacaca judges, local mediators, and Local Defense Force personnel. On one page, the report comprehensively lists the various forms of corrupt payments made in Rwanda's 30 districts, such as "ink for the pen," "beer for the mediators," "fuel for the leaders," and "foot massage for officials."

¶5. (SBU) Toward the end of the report, a "corruption perceptions" chart lists in rank order the levels of corruption among various categories of public and private institutions. Traffic police fared worst. Local media, churches and NGOs ranked as the three least corrupt institutions. The justice sector came in as the second-most corrupt institution, igniting a hail of indignant public reaction from government officials in the courts, the Ministry of Justice and the prosecution service. Senior officials from the three institutions complained (rightly enough) that the body of the report listed generally minor offenses for each of them, and they demanded to know the "scientific basis" for the chart. Other government offices did not challenge the rankings, and some members of Parliament cautioned that justice sector officials should not overreact.

¶6. (C) Comment. The Ombudsman has shared with us on several occasions his office's clear-eyed assessment of corruption in various offices (Ref B). He has made the same sort of assessments in public, most notably at the previous National Dialogue last December (ref C). Those institutions who are supposedly in the vanguard of the anti-corruption struggle do not appear to enjoy the spotlight when it is turned on them. End comment.

Political Parties Continue Seeking Recognition - One Recognized?

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¶7. (SBU) Two groups have pursued registration as new political parties the last few months: PS-Imberakuti (the Social Party of Truth-Tellers) and ADRUIUA (Republican Democratic Alliance/Legacy of Agathe Uwilingiyimana) (Ref A).

PS-I had a June press conference halted by local officials and the police, with the party leadership briefly detained. After denying many applications for permission, local officials finally allowed PS-I to hold its second congress. PS-I recently submitted its revised documentation to the Ministry of Local Government (which rejected its first application). A Ministry official telephoned pol/econ counselor July 22 to say that the Ministry had accepted its revised application and would grant registration to PS-I in the near future. Government radio announced that evening that the weekly cabinet meeting had approved the party's registration. ADRUIUA has equally attempted several times to hold its initial party congress, only to find district officials canceling scheduled meetings and requiring the party to seek additional authorization for new meetings.

¶8. (C) PS-I leadership has on several occasions publicly declared that it will criticize the government as it sees fit. It will act as a real political party, it says, unlike what it terms the "comedy" of weak parties today in Rwanda, and work for the betterment of the mass of the population. PS-I leader Bernard Ntaganda at the party congress used a phrase similar to "rubanda nyamwinshi," a notorious term for "masses" from the Habyarimana era, when "masses" meant "the Hutu masses," excluding Tutsi citizens from social and

political life. He has thus opened himself to charges of divisionism, something a local journalist accused him of in a recent presidential press conference. Issuance of party registration by the Ministry of Local Government would mean this indiscretion on his part (which he tells us was inadvertent) has, for the moment, been overlooked.

#### Nkunda Tries a Letter-Writing Campaign

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¶9. (C) Following his legal team's last unsuccessful effort to secure his release by a court in Gisenyi (ref A), Laurent Nkunda's lawyers have embarked upon a letter-writing campaign. They have sent several letters to President Kagame requesting his release, with copies to the Ministries of Justice, Foreign Affairs, and Defense. So far, say his lawyers, no responses have been received. They have also contemplated filing a petition before the military high court in Kigali, something they tried unsuccessfully to do several months ago. His team now believes Nkunda to be located in or near Kigali, and to be in the custody of military authorities. They have still not been allowed to meet with him, although family members have been granted some form of contact, perhaps by telephone. A contact in the National Security Services subsequently confirmed to us that Nkunda had in fact been moved to the Kigali area recently, his detention in Gisenyi having been deemed to close to the border with DRC.

¶10. (C) Comment. When all else fails (and Rwandan courts continue to deny the legal team's petitions for habeas corpus), try heartfelt appeals to the Head of State -- that appears to be the Nkunda legal strategy for now. End comment.  
CASPER